

VZCZCXRO9600
OO RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHAR #1520/01 1921756
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 111756Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4900
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0637
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 001520

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [GH](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: GHANA'S PRESIDENT KUFUOR BEGINS CABINET SHUFFLE

REF: A. ACCRA 1041

[1](#)B. ACCRA 1412

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On July 10 and 11, President Kufuor submitted to parliament the names of thirteen new ministers in the beginning of a Cabinet shuffle. The new list promotes a number of deputy ministers, including Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Akwasi Osei-Adjei to Foreign Minister. The new Minister of Trade, Joe Baidoe-Ansah, is a surprise choice unknown to us. More names are expected soon and the new ministers will take office as soon as they are vetted (by late July). End Summary.

Background

[1](#)2. (U) On June 19, President Kufuor asked for the resignation of all his ministers from the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) aspiring to be the party's presidential candidate in the 2008 election (ref B). After some internal debate, on June 23 Kufuor agreed to give all the aspirants until the first week of July to leave office, pending the naming of their replacements. Eight ministers submitted resignations: Minister of Foreign Affairs and NEPAD Nana Akufo-Addo, Minister of Communications Mike Ocquaye, Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing Hackman Owusu-Agyeman, Minister of Defense Kwame Addo-Kufuor, Minister of Trade and Industry Alan Kyerematen, Minister of Education and Sports Papa Owusu-Ankomah, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Felix Owusu-Adjapong, and Minister of Tourism and Diasporan Relations Jake Obestebi-Lamptey (who already left office).

The Shuffle Begins

[1](#)3. (U) On July 10, President Kufuor forced Minister of Public Sector Reform Paa Kwesi Nduom to resign. As a member of the Convention Peoples Party (CPP), Nduom was not bound by the NPP's constitution requiring sitting ministers to resign once they register as presidential candidates. He reportedly had hoped to stay on until November before officially launching his presidential campaign.

[1](#)4. (U) On July 11 the President submitted the following Cabinet changes to parliament for vetting:

Akwasi Osei-Adjei - Foreign Minister (from Deputy Foreign

Minister)

Cecilia Dapaah - Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing (from Deputy Minister of the same Ministry)

Ambrose Dery - Minister of State at the Attorney General's Office (a new position, from Upper West Regional Minister)

Anthony Akoto Osei - Minister of State at the Ministry of Finance (a new position, from Deputy Minister of Finance)

Nana Akomea - Minister of Manpower, Youth and Employment (Deputy Minister of Tourism and also Minister of Information in the early Kufuor years)

Oboshie Sai-Coffie - Minister of Information and National Orientation (from Deputy Minister of the same Ministry)

Joe Baidoe-Ansah - Minister of Trade, Industry, Private Sector Development and Presidential Special Initiatives (from Deputy Minister of Tourism)

Samuel Owusu-Adjei - Minister of State for Public Sector Reform (from Deputy Minister of Health)

Nana Obiri Boahene - Minister of State for Interior (a new position, former Chairman of the Brong Ahafo NPP)

Benjamin Aggrey-Ntim - Minister of Communications (from Deputy Minister of Communications)

George Hikah Bensen - Upper West Regional Minister (former Deputy Minister of the same region)

Kwadwo Afram-Asiedu - Eastern Regional Minister (from Deputy Minister of Trade)

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Alhassan Samari - Upper East Regional Minister

Comment

15. (SBU) Some portfolios remain unfilled and we expect more names to be submitted to parliament in the next few days. The current ministers are expected to leave office as soon as the new ministers are vetted, which should happen by the end of July. Minister of Trade Alan Kyerematen is expected to stay through the AGOA Forum. The shuffle will elevate a number of deputy ministers and appears to reward loyalty and competence, while removing from office ministers who were distracted by their presidential campaigns. The shuffle also doubles the number of female full ministers (from two to four). The new Minister of State positions may strengthen their respective ministries, but may also create alternate power centers which undermine their effectiveness. It is not clear if the current ministers in charge of those ministries will be staying on.

16. (SBU) Minister Nduom was a key player in the development of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact and in our fiscal decentralization efforts. He can stay on as the Chairman of the Millennium Development Authority (MIDA, MCC's Ghanaian counterpart), although our information suggests he may not last long. Akwasi Osei-Adjei, Ghana's next Foreign Minister, is an excellent Mission contact. He is polished, well-informed, reasonable, and personable, although he lacks Akufo-Addo's political stature and breadth of experience. Anthony Osei, Cecilia Dapaah, Oboshie Sai-Coffie, and Ambrose Dery are well known to us and very capable. A surprise choice is the relatively unknown new Trade Minister Joe Baidoe-Ansah, a former journalist and a Deputy Tourism Minister for one year.

BRIDGEWATER